

Press Office
U.S. Department of Homeland
Security
500 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20472



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Contact:
FEMA Region VIII News Desk:
(303) 235-4908

News Release



Utah Division of Homeland
Security: Joe Dougherty
(801) 664-1530

FEMA AND UTAH PARTNER ON BUILDING ASSESSMENT PILOT PROJECT TO SUPPORT SCHOOL EARTHQUAKE SAFETY

SALT LAKE CITY, UT—The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the State of Utah partnered in a building assessment pilot project targeting a representative sampling of eighty (80) public and charter schools to analyze their risks and support the planning and implementation of future earthquake risk reduction activities. The pilot project screened about 10 percent of the public schools in the Wasatch Front. It is intended to lead the way for developing a complete inventory of vulnerable school buildings in the area.

“We’re excited to partner with the State of Utah for this important project,” said FEMA Region VIII Administrator Robin Finegan. “This inventory will be a valuable planning tool as communities continue to prepare for a potential earthquake along the Wasatch Front.”

FEMA, under the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program (NEHRP), provided cooperative agreement funding, training support, and technical assistance to Utah to plan and execute the pilot project. Twenty local engineers volunteered and participated. They used *FEMA 154 Rapid Visual Screening of Buildings for Potential Earthquake Damage*, a nationally accepted standard procedure for rapid assessment so local communities can understand their vulnerabilities in their existing building stock. During the process, Utah volunteers also tested and utilized FEMA’s Rapid Observation of Vulnerability and Estimation of Risk (ROVER) tool to digitize its data collection and building assessment records.

Essentially, the pilot project will enable Utah to identify which schools need further engineering evaluation and future seismic retrofitting to ensure the safety of staff and students should an earthquake occur. This would also set a model that Utah could employ towards a more comprehensive building assessment project that would include other State-owned critical facilities.

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